



U.S. Department of Justice

Thomas Scott Woodward
Acting United States Attorney
Northern District of Oklahoma

110 West Seventh Street, Suite 300
Tulsa, Oklahoma 74119

(918)382-2700

NEWS RELEASE

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Contact: Randal Edgmon

Man Admits to Using Counterfeit Poker Chips to Steal Money from Casino

Acting U.S. Attorney Thomas Scott Woodward announced that a 49 year-old man plead guilty in federal court today to stealing thousands of dollars from a northeastern Oklahoma casino.

William Reece Lancaster, of Joplin, Missouri, plead guilty to the charge of Theft from a Gaming Establishment on Indian Land in Excess of \$1,000. The latest theft, which resulted in Lancaster's arrest, occurred on October 8, 2009, at the Seneca Cayuga Grand Lake Casino near Grove, Oklahoma. The charges were contained in a Grand Jury indictment returned last November. Lancaster admitted that he used a special process of bleaching and dyeing legitimate .25 cent poker chips to match the casino's \$500 chips. He would then introduce the counterfeit chips into play at the blackjack tables or exchange them for cash at the cashier's window. He admits using this method to steal at least \$27,236 from the casino.

Sentencing in the case is set for March 9, 2010, after the completion of a pre-sentence investigation by the U.S. Probation Office.

The crime was investigated by the Bureau of Indian Affairs Office of Law Enforcement Services. Assistant U.S. Attorney R. Trent Shores represented the government in this case. The prosecution proceeded in federal court because the crime occurred on land designated as Indian Country, where major criminal offenses fall under the jurisdiction of the United States Courts.